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Frederick County Health Department

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**AUGUST 30, 2011**

## **“MIXED EMOTIONS” ART SHOW HIGHLIGHTS EXPRESSIONS OF LOCAL YOUTH**

**FREDERICK, MD --** Emotionally expressive artwork created by children impacted by family substance abuse will be on display during a public art viewing on Thursday, September 8th at the Frederick County Health Department from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. The “Mixed Emotions: Art of Recovery” art display illustrates the wide range of emotions experienced by children of living with family substance abuse.

“The extensive emotional range expressed visually in the show mirrors poignantly the volatility of living with the cycle of substance abuse, addiction, relapse and recovery of a loved one,” states Julie Wood-Merchant, Program Coordinator with the Frederick County Health Department’s *Kids Like Us* program and Board Certified, Registered Art Therapist. “The creative process of self expression

**--more--**



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through art helps our youth on their path of recovery, through improving their health and emotional well-being. Showing their artwork publicly, not only affirms the value of their endeavors, but tells other youth affected by family addiction that they are not alone,” Merchant continues.

The artwork is the product of a summer camp for children living with substance abuse. The camp is part of the *Kids Like Us (KLU)* program, which offers structure and support during the summer months and provides enriching opportunities for student learning and interpersonal growth. *KLU* is a prevention program that aims to help youth ages 9 to 14 impacted by family substance abuse. The program aspires to prevent the continuation of the addiction cycle by encouraging and teaching participants to express their feelings in positive ways, make positive friends, have fun safely, develop a positive self-image, avoid negative situations, understand the effects of substance abuse on the family and build trust.

For more information about the public art viewing or the *Kids Like Us* program, contact Julie Wood-Merchant at 301-600-3281. For information about substance abuse and mental health services in Frederick County, contact the Frederick County Health Department, Behavioral Health Services Division at 301-600-1775, or visit [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HealthDept](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HealthDept).

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